



Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Project Public Scoping Comment Summary Report

October 18 – November 17, 2004



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**



Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Public Scoping Summary

Introduction

Washington State Ferries (WSF), with financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is considering a new multimodal ferry terminal in Mukilteo. The existing terminal is aging and in need of major repairs. It cannot efficiently handle current and projected growth on the route or meet future security requirements.

The new terminal will improve access for ferry passengers to rail and bus connections; improve terminal operations including circulation and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists; improve access to the waterfront; and accommodate projected growth for both passengers and vehicles on the route.

The terminal project has begun an environmental review process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The environmental review process will analyze possible impacts and evaluate potential alternatives for the terminal. The first step is project scoping. This report outlines the project's public scoping process and summarizes the public comments that were received during the scoping period. The entire text of all the comments received is included in a separate document (Appendix A).

Project Scoping

The purpose of scoping is to allow the public, agencies and interested parties to comment on the range of issues to be addressed during the environmental review process. The public scoping period ran from October 18, 2004 to November 17, 2004¹. WSF invited all interested parties to submit comments and made available several methods for the public to provide input during this period including:

- E-mail—mukilteoferryproject@wsdot.wa.gov
- Comment postcard (included in the scoping notice mailing)
- Public open houses where participants filled out comment forms and recorded verbal comments

WSF reviewed all comments and took the following action:

- Sent an e-mail or response card reply to acknowledge receipt of comment
- Recorded the text of the comment and contact information of the individual into the project database
- Summarized the comments and provided a report to the project team

¹ WSF did receive a few comments outside of the official scoping period and those comments have been incorporated into the scoping record.

Public Scoping Open Houses

WSF held two public scoping open houses—on November 9 (Mukilteo) and November 10 (Clinton) from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Over 110 people attended the events. The purpose of the open houses was to inform communities on both sides of the Mukilteo-Clinton route of the environmental review process and to receive input on the project.

The public was notified of the open houses in several ways, including:

- Mailed approximately 17,000 notices to residents and businesses in Mukilteo and select areas of Whidbey Island and Everett, and to contacts in the project database
- E-mailed notices to route list and contacts in the project database
- Distributed notices at Mukilteo and Clinton terminals and on vessels on Mukilteo-Clinton route
- Distributed notices at Mukilteo City Hall and Mukilteo Library
- Advertised in the Mukilteo Beacon and the South Whidbey Record
- Sent news release to media database
- Placed notices in the Whidbey Marketplace and Community Journal
- Placed notice in newsletter for dedicated bus route (#177) from terminal to Boeing
- Placed notice in Community Transit materials and information on the website
- Provided information on the WSF project website—
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/mukilteoterminal/>

The same information was available at both meetings. Display boards were placed throughout the room and project team members were available to answer questions and discuss issues with attendees. Copies of the display boards were distributed as handouts along with a comment form and project materials.

Participants provided feedback by writing comments or verbally providing comments to a note taker. Comment stations were positioned throughout the room, allowing participants to sit and fill out the comment form at the meeting. Project materials included project contact information—e-mail, mail, phone and the project website—so individuals could provide comments following the open houses.

Summary of Comments

The project received a total of 422 contacts (comments and requests for information). Of those contacts, 196 requested that they be included on the project mailing list, but provided no feedback about the project. The remaining 226 provided comments about the project. The table below categorizes the comments by how they were received and origin.

Comment Format	Responses Received	Mukilteo Respondents	Whidbey Island Respondents	Other Areas
E-mail	10	3	2	5
Public Meeting Comment Form	129	45	44	40
Mail	283	94	142	47
<i>Total</i>	<i>422</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>92</i>

The majority of open house participants stated that they were most interested in the project because they:

- Lived nearby (60 references)
- Are occasional ferry riders (28 references)
- Are regular ferry riders (19 references)

Participants were also asked to identify what project issues are most important to them². The responses are summarized below:

- Traffic (66 references)
- Intermodal connections (48 references)
- Environment (43 references)
- Public access to waterfront (39 references)
- Parking (32 references)
- Safety (28 references)
- Economic opportunities (9 references)

Individuals were also asked to comment on additional issues that are important to them. The most prevalent included:

- Japanese Gulch access
- Alternatives
- Project support/accelerate timeline
- Project cost/funding

The following section briefly outlines the types of comments received within the categories that were referenced most frequently. Direct quotes (italicized) from interested parties follow each summary to provide a sample of the tone of the comments. Comment reference numbers are listed so that the entire comments can be referenced in Appendix A.

Traffic

The project's impact on local traffic was a priority for residents on both sides of the Mukilteo-Clinton route. Mukilteo residents focused on how the offloading ferry traffic

² Please note that most individuals identified more than one issue.

and ferry lines impede local access to homes and businesses, and create congestion. Many were concerned about possible increases in traffic and congestion, and how that would impact their daily activities. They asked for additional holding space to reduce the backups on the Mukilteo Speedway.

As a Mukilteo resident, it's the disruption in traffic, both foot and car, during the ferry's disembarking string that concerns us most. (#94)

Wish we could avoid coming through Mukilteo--with traffic cutting into the ferry line and coming from all directions. (#58)

525 is anything but a "speedway" and we're going to overload it. (#228)

Mukilteo City traffic needs to have #1 priority -- as plans stand priority is given to the rail lines with little or no room along the waterfront for normal business traffic and ferry traffic and no provision for parking of cars by people trying to do business with the businesses along the waterfront. (#309)

A few of the comments focused on pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.

Please be sure to include provisions for neighborhood walkers to come safely to and from the neighborhood to walk along the waterfront. (#139)

Whidbey Island residents shared concerns about the possible increase in cars that would be associated with more frequent sailings on the route.

We in the Clinton community are presently having trouble getting cooperation with WSDOT in providing 525 sections with relief of traffic going through our community. We are definitely going to have to have additional help when this new terminal is built and the surge of new traffic comes with it. (#286)

Major concern is how increased traffic will affect Clinton. We already feel like a divided town with all the traffic coming through. A plan needs to be made to deal with the effect of this. (#328)

Intermodal Connections

Many of the comments applauded the project goal of providing ferry passengers direct access to train and bus connections. Some wanted to take the ferry and then ride the train to downtown Seattle or SeaTac airport without an automobile. Individuals requested coordination between the transportation agencies (i.e. schedules) so that connections could be made smoothly.

YES! YES! YES! It's about time that you could walk off the ferry and get on a train and get to Seattle or Vancouver--it would be great if you could connect to [the] airport! (#112)

Really looking forward to a rail terminal at Mukilteo which would get me to downtown Seattle without an auto! (#249)

Hope you give details of all other public transport connections from proposed terminal--commuter trains, long-haul trains, express buses to Seattle, etc. (#246)

A few comments focused on making it easier for the elderly and people with disabilities to utilize the connections without walking long distances.

Elderly people from the island need a way to transport packages, luggage etc. from train station, bus station to ferries. Perhaps, a people mover belt, or luggage transport carts like at the airport would be very beneficial. The distance from the ferry terminal to the train station appears like a long distance for some elderly people to walk. (#396)

Environment

Comments and concerns about the environment and wildlife were varied. Many were uneasy about how the project might impact the marine environment, specifically eelgrass, Dungeness crab and rockfish. Others were more focused on the impacts that an access road would have on Japanese Gulch.

This area of the Mukilteo waterfront is prime location for Dungeness crab. The reason it is so good is the mussels that grow on the pilings of the government pier. Please leave as much of it in place as you can to protect this valuable resource. (#299)

Mitigate adverse impacts through shoreline restoration and restoration of Japanese Creek and Eelgrass beds. (#289)

The Puget Sound is slowly being poisoned by nonpoint pollution. The long term environmental costs are very real concerns for the Whidbey economy. Many of us who earn a living on-island do so at the grace of tourists who come to experience a preserved and seemingly pristine natural environment. (#294)

A couple of other considerations are the large quantity of rockfish which inhabit the "artificial reef" out in front of the tank farm and all the eel grass in the shallows. Both are vital to the health of the underwater environment. Another thought—there is a large concrete wall surrounding the backside of the farm—old broken concrete makes excellent material for artificial reefs. The area in front of the farm could really benefit from this. (#299)

Several individuals voiced concerns that there would be runoff of fuel or other products from the terminal operations and wondered how that issue would be addressed.

What facilities will be available to fuel and service the ferries to ensure no fuel, sewage, etc. get into the water? (#235)

Major concern for both is toxic runoff of copper, nickel and petroleum products. Needs superior storm water management LID, especially permeable paving for parking areas a necessity? Consult cities of Bellingham and Seattle for good examples! (#275)

Public Access

Many comments reflected a desire to open the waterfront for various types of recreation and public use. Suggestions were varied. Some wanted better pathways for walkers and bikers, others hoped for public fishing areas, and some just wanted to better enjoy the beauty of the area.

Public access to all beach areas should be maximized. (#355)

Include waterfront walkway through entire length of project—Boeing pier to Mukilteo city park. Do not allow spot zoning in this area. (#298)

A waterside promenade for folks parked in the holding areas seems to be missing—you show a hardscape plaza but what about a park and trail connections to the lighthouse park? (#294)

Would like to include a coffee shop to sit and enjoy the beauty and ferry activity, even if not going to ride the ferry that day. (#341)

Parking

Parking comments were mixed. Individuals wanted to make sure that there was sufficient parking for the various types of users—commuters, transit riders, overnight travelers, ferry employees—but many were concerned about where the parking would be located. They understood that parking spaces were needed to support the project, but many did not want parking on the waterfront, where it would take up valuable property and potentially affect views.

There does not appear to be areas (in either plan) for ferry personnel to park and walk on the ferry. No parking for bus riders. (#235)

Need parking lot to allow use of commuter rail and public transit! (#46)

Waterfront not intended to be used as the parking lot of the world. (#292)

Some suggested building a park-and-ride lot or some type of off-site lot with a shuttle service.

Considerations for commuter parking need to be made. Offsite parking is needed. We need more offsite commuter parking (park and ride) and better access to it. Perhaps a shuttle to parking lots? Do what you can to promote walk on traffic. (#351)

Many hoped that the transportation agencies (WSF, Sound Transit, etc.) would coordinate and share parking.

Construct multi-use (e.g. employee & sounder & community transit) parking garage to minimize footprint on the land. Get the holding lanes off the speedway. (#289)

Safety

Many people expressed concerns about safety. Most of these were about traffic, but individuals also wanted to ensure safe operations, safe connections to transit, etc.

I wish that since it is still a long time away that the ferry holding line would have to stay back further than my driveway, as I cannot see to get out. It is VERY dangerous. (#116)

Need to keep cars off surface streets for safety. (#397)

Please be sure to include provisions for neighborhood walkers to come safely to and from the neighborhood to walk along the waterfront. (#139)

Economic Opportunities

A few individuals indicated that economic development opportunities were a priority. Most hoped that the new terminal would include shops and restaurants that might encourage ferry riders to get out of their cars and spend money.

It would be nice to add business (shops) to the area and make it a desired destination. (#304)

Japanese Gulch Access

While not part of the ferry terminal project, the issue of access through Japanese Gulch elicited the widest range of responses of all the issues. Some strongly supported an access road through the gulch to alleviate traffic on the Mukilteo Speedway.

Eventually, additional access to the waterfront, presumably via Japanese Gulch, will be needed to accommodate future needs. (#162)

We must continue [to] plan to relocate ferry access roadway to Japanese Gulch area to get ferry traffic out of center of Mukilteo. With good planning and design, this can be done with little environmental impact. The compact terminal plan will make a less costly, more environmentally friendly tie to the relocated access road. (#298)

The traffic problem is not being solved. You have to have traffic from 92nd. If you put the highway down the Gulch you would have access to the freeway past Boeing and then you have four lanes of freeway and four lanes of speedway

through Paine Field Boulevard. That makes sense--eight lanes to use to approach terminal. Waiting to finish the Gulch is going to cost millions more. (#311)

Others were in strong opposition to creating access through Japanese Gulch because they wanted to protect wildlife and preserve open space.

No access to Japanese Gulch! It's one of the few green spaces left & there is wildlife living there. (#37)

Please consider leaving Japanese Gulch intact! It is a special birding area and there is a roost of blue heron. Traffic is going to be a problem. (#15)

Alternatives

Two alternatives for the terminal design were developed by WSF for discussion during the scoping period. Open house participants were asked their preference between the two alternatives and for additional suggestions or other alternatives for consideration. Below is a summary of preferences.

- Compact Terminal Alternative (42 references)
- Upland Terminal Alternative (13 references)
- No preference (12 references)
- Additional suggestions (35 references)

The majority of individuals preferred a more compact terminal alternative because the smaller footprint left more land for other opportunities. There were questions about how additional funds would be raised to pay for this option. Participants also had varying ideas about how the leftover land should be utilized.

Minimize use of land to allow for other uses. (#289)

It would leave beach for public access and education as well as being more cost effective in the long run. (#391)

Very reasonable to handle traffic & use of area. (#227)

Some preferred an upland alternative due to environmental and safety concerns with increased over-water coverage.

Putting the waiting cars on a holding platform over the water appears to be an expensive and environmentally unsound concept. All the gas and oil that would leak into the near-shore habitat where a lot of divers put in does not seem like an appropriate response to the challenge of holding waiting vehicles. (#294)

Prefer the least over-water footprint effects to the near-shore marine habitat. Want to see the stream at the east end of the project (Japanese Gulch?) freed to flow in a more natural stream bed to its mouth and allowed to from its original

pocket estuary habitat and natal near shore and natal stream potential free of man-made obstructions and barriers. (#383)

Because of earthquakes! Even if you meet federal and/or state standards, you still have the potential for dumping the 260 vehicles in the water if you use the Compact Terminal Alternative. As a business owner, I would normally prefer the CTA because of maximizing use of land. (#243)

A few individuals suggested alternative locations for the ferry terminal.

Have Washington State Ferries build a ferry terminal on the Port of Everett land. Everett has always wanted traffic to help business in the area. (#89)

Floating bridge alternative ever considered? (#230)

Project Support

A substantial number of comments expressed support for the project. Some wanted increased capacity on the route, others believed that the new terminal would improve the current traffic situation, and many appreciated the efficient connections to train and bus service. Many supporters indicated that they would like the project timeline accelerated.

Let's get started! The sooner the better. I commute by ferry and bus everyday, and an updated dock and terminal a must! (#83)

We think the project is needed and look forward to its development—a compressed timeline if at all possible would be desirable. (#84)

Project Cost/Funding

Some commented on the cost of the project, asking specific questions about how the project would be funded. A few people were concerned that there would be an increase in fares to pay for the project.

I trust your reports will include information about projected impact on fares and discount packages (under \$96). (#39)

What about cost and its effect on future fares? I am a senior citizen with extremely limited income, and the ferry fares are already prohibitively high for me, to the extent that I cannot attend many cultural events off-island or visit people on the mainland except on very rare occasions. (#43)

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